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**FIGHTING ILLINI WRESTLING**

**Isaiah Martinez Wins Second-Consecutive U.S. Open 74KG Title**

***Zac Braunagel earns Junior World Team Spot in Greco Roman.***

**LAS VEGAS** - Two-time NCAA and four-time Big Ten champion [Isaiah Martinez](#) won his second-consecutive U.S. Open Freestyle title at 74 kilograms Saturday at the South Point Arena in Las Vegas. Martinez now advances to the 2019 World Team Trials Challenge Tournament Wrestle-Off, with the winner advancing to the Final X match on June 15. The Final X would be a best of three series against World bronze medalist Jordan Burroughs, with the winner earning the spot on this year's U.S. Senior World Team.

Martinez defeated Tommy Gantt 6-4 in the finals at 74 kilograms. He led 3-0 at the break after a takedown and step out. Martinez added on to his lead to 6-0 in the second period after an exposure and step out. Gantt was unable to overcome the 6-0 deficit, and Martinez captured his second U.S. Open title in two years.

Former Illini Zane Richards earned a third place finish at 57 kg at the U.S. Open. Richards defeated Pan American Champion Josh Rodriguez. He then went on to earn a tech fall victory over NCAA Champion Darian Cruz to advance to the third-place match, which he won 8-2. IRTC Athlete Travis Rice also earned a third place finish at the U.S. Open at 63 kg. Both wrestlers will advance to the World Team Trials Challenge Tournament where they will compete in the bracket and try to earn a spot at the Final X.

Freshman [Zac Braunagel](#) also earned a spot on the Junior World Team in Greco Roman at 82 kg. Braunagel defeated Max Wohlabaugh, 2-0, for the spot on the Junior World Team. Junior World Championships will take place August 12-18, 2019 in Estonia.

[Zac Braunagel](#) and twin brother and Illini freshman [Danny Braunagel](#) also each wrestled to second-place finishes in their respective freestyle brackets in the U.S. Junior Open. Zac took second place at 86 kg, while Danny placed second at 74 kg. Freshman [Justin Cardani](#) finished seventh at 57 kg.

2019 World Team Trials are up next for Martinez, Richards and Rice. The trials will take place May 17-19 in Raleigh, N.C., being held at Reynolds Colosseum on the campus of North Carolina State University.

For complete coverage of Fighting Illini Wrestling, visit [FightingIllini.com](http://FightingIllini.com), follow the Illini on Twitter ([@illiniwrestling](https://twitter.com/illiniwrestling)) and Instagram ([illiniwrestling](https://www.instagram.com/illiniwrestling)) and like [Fighting Illini Wrestling](https://www.facebook.com/FightingIlliniWrestling) on Facebook.

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